

The Tragical BALLAD:

O R,

The Nobleman's Cruelty to his Son.

PART I.

BOTH parents and lovers. I pray now attend
Unto this relation which here I have penn'd.
'Tis of a young 'squire that now I do write,
Who courted his father's maid day and night.

Tho' she was a servant, of mean degree,
And he a young 'squire, as rich as might be.
He met this maiden one day in the hall,
Unto her this compliment then he let fall:

Thou sweetest jewel, and joy of my heart,
It's a pleasure to meet, but a grief to part.
Now grant me the favour, tho' joys to restore,
Since never was lover so wounded before.

For thee I have suffer'd much sorrow and pain,
Therefore, my jewel, do me not disdain:
But send a soft glance from thy beautiful eyes,
To comfort thy lover who languishing lies.

The damsel she stood like a person struck dumb,
While blood like flashes of lightning did come.
At length she broke silence: Young 'squire, forbear,
I am your poor servant, therefore forbear.

There's many young ladies of honour and fame,
That's fit for your grandeur, and equal your name;
But I am a damsel of mean degree,
Content in this station, your servant to be.

There's none in the world I admire like thee.
Then why will my jewel be cruel to me?
And cause me with anguish to sigh and complain;
O wound me no more with cruel disdain.

What weapon's compar'd with the arrow of love?
It goes thro' the heart, and often does prove
Destruction, if Cupid hath power to seize,
If he wounds in our sleep, we die by degrees.

In fetters of love here I lay at your feet,
Receive my petition, vouchsafe to compleat
My happiness, in sweet raptures of joy,
No longer be cruel, no longer be coy.

O what makes thee silent, sweet Susan the fair?
Why must I live between hope and despair?
O why in this lingering state must I bleed?
Restore me to life, or dispatch me with speed.

At his melting words she began to comply,
With sighs from her heart, and tears from her eyes.
I consent, noble 'squire, to be your bride.
But what will become of us both, she reply'd,

When the noble knight, your father dear,
And the good lady, your mother, doth hear?
We both shall be ruin'd. Ne'er fear it, said he,
My dear can be wedded in private to me.

PART II.

NEXT morning in private they both wedded were,
No triumph was seen, but industrious care.
He kiss'd her, and said, I'll be true to thee, dear,
And no friend I have of this blessing shall hear.

So love, I would have you be private awhile,
Discover if not, tho' you should be with child.
Speak nothing of wedding, speak nothing of me,
For fear my parents prove cruel to thee.

Take courage, and suffer shame for awhile,
Until my parents we can reconcile:
And in a short time we shall come to agree,
If thou, my dear jewel, wilt be ruled by me.

With kisses and loving embraces likewise,
She vow'd she would, with tears in her eyes.
They parted, and none of his friends, 'tis said,
Knew that the 'squire had wedded the maid.

But now comes the grief and sorrow at last,
When five or six months were gone and past,
So large in the waist she began to show,
Her coats and aprons too short did grow.

Her lady said, What is the matter now?
Methinks you look mighty big, Mrs. Sue.
Come tell me with whom you the wanton have play'd?
For you are with-child. Yet nothing she said.

What spark, Mrs. Susan, has led you astray?
Come tell me, or else I will turn you away.
Yes she would say nothing, but seem'd discontent,
With tears in her eyes from her service she went.

To one of the tenants then strait she did go
And there did abide in sorrow and woe.
Until travailing pains came on her to fast,
As women and midwife were sent for at last.

Now while this poor soul was in racking pain,
The women and midwife, with much disdain,
Come tell us the father, the midwife did cry,
Or else you in sorrow and anguish must lie.

An honest good husband I have, I declare,
Whose honoured name awhile I forbear
To mention, altho' my life I do pay.
For my sweet husband I'll never betray.

Because of his noble honour and fame.
Then in came the 'squire, the 'squire by name,
Who under the window had listen'd awhile,
Crying to the midwife, Deliver the child.

How dare you deny to deliver my wife?
Whom I do love as dear as my life.
The midwife and women said, Madam, sit down,
And soon we will bring the young 'squire a son.

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PART III.

BUT as to what follows in the third part,
I'm sure it will pierce each true lover's heart.
I think in all England the like was ne'er known,
And so, I pray now, take heed every one.

It was told his parents the very next day,
How Mrs. Susan, whom they turn'd away
For being with-child, was their son's wife,
Who vows that he loves her as dear as his life.

I cannot believe it, the father he said.
Nor I, says his mother, she's none of his bride.
Now while they were talking the 'squire came in,
When soon his sorrows and griefs did begin.

We wish you much joy, his father he said.
Was there no one more fit for to be your bride
Than Mrs. Susan, of parents so poor?
If she be your bride we'll own you no more.

The 'squire then fell upon his knees,
Dear parents, you may do as you please:
Altho' the same should cost me my life,
Sweet Susan, indeed, I have chose for my wife.

And should be the same, was she poorer than Job,
And I a prince royal, or lord of the globe.
That jewel, sweet Susan, I swear should be mine.
Well, well, said his mother, it is my design.

To banish you both, tho' it cost me my life.
You'll have but small comfort in her for a wife.
His mother away in a passion did run.
Declaring she'd murder both her and her son.

What meanest thou this, O mother, said he?
It is no Christian part thus cruel to be.
O worst of women, what would you have done?
Murder poor innocents to plague your son.

The lady, his mother, with ambitious heart,
Said nothing to him, but thence did depart.
Now in short time after they found out a way
The life of the 'squire, the son, to betray.

The very next morning they sent for their son,
I have sworn, said the father, and it must be done.
Come, strive for to please your mother and me,
To-morrow, my son, you are bound for the sea.

Along with brave Ormond and Rooke you must go,
To fight the proud French and the Spaniards also.
And in the mean time I will strive, my dear child,
For to make your mother and you reconcil'd.

I'll likewise be kind to your wife and son,
Well then, noble father, your will shall be done,
He come to his Susan with a heart full of woe,
And said, My dear jewel, from you I must go.

Therefore, my sweet wife, I bid you adieu,
Since my cruel parents do force me from you.
Alas! for to plough the watery main,
Kind Heaven, protect thee 'till I come again.

My father commands me to sail the next wind,
I hope in short time to us he'll be kind:
Now while he was telling his sorrowful tale,
Tho wind it grew high, and the ship it set sail.

PART IV.

THEY sailed next morning for the coast of Spain,
But oh! the poor 'squire return'd not again.
A desperate cannon ball did separate
His head from his body at Vigo or late.

'Tis thought that his parents had order'd it so,
If possible, he should be slain by the foe.
For in short time after, as I do declare,
The ghost of the 'squire did to them appear.

And came to his father and mother that night,
The room it appeared like day, 'twas so light.
The apparition appeared in blood,
With his head in his hand by the bed-side he stood.

With three bitter groans he was heard to cry,
It was you, cruel mother, caus'd my destiny.
And then with a groan or two banish'd away.
But still he appeared unto them each day.

With them in the coach he at noon-day did ride,
And walk'd in the garden, close by their side;
And many a prank with his mother he play'd,
It is no great matter, his father he said.

Thro' thy cruel pride I have lost my son,
Thod worst of women, see what thou hast done.
So to his son's wife he went, as we hear,
And settled upon her two hundred a year.

Unknown to my lady, sweet daughter, said he,
This is to maintain my grandson and thee.
By reason your husband, my son, is dead,
Oh! then I am ruin'd, I'm ruin'd, she said.

Was ever poor damsel afflicted like me?
My sweetest of husbands lies dead in the sea.
She kiss'd her dear infant a thousand times o'er,
Now thy father is dead, none but thee I adore.

Do not, my dear daughter, be dissatisfy'd;
For you and your infant I mean to provide.
'Twas my unkind lady caus'd this discontent.
And so up to London away she was sent.

Where now I will leave her in sorrow and woe,
To show how the spirit perplexed them so;
And caus'd them to lament day and night,
When strait for the clergy his father did write.

When these learned men from Oxford did come,
If you can but lay this spirit of my son,
Five hundred pounds to you I will pay.
He haunts me wherever I go night and day.

Most part of the night he did with them contend,
At last, being conquer'd, he begged of them
That they would not put him into the Red Sea.
No, no, said the clergy, we grant it to thee.

Sir Knight, said the clergy, where shall he be laid?
In my fish-pond, under that island, he said.
Now in this island e'er since has been seen
A small tree, which in winter and summer is green.

His father said, I have ruin'd my son.
His mother cries out, Oh! what have I done?
His wife laments for her own 'squire dear.
And so let this tragical story end here.